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President Signs 2003 Defense Authorization Bill Includes Akin proposal for new Super Hornet program

Today, President Bush signed the 2003 defense authorization. The act authorizes the largest increase in defense spending in twenty years with increased pay and benefits for U.S. military personnel, over \$7.3 billion for programs to combat terrorism and \$7.8 billion for missile defense research.

“As a member of the House Armed Services, the committee in which this bill originated, I am very proud of what it accomplishes and the much needed boost and support it will give to the long-neglected U.S. military,” said Congressman Todd Akin.

The Defense Authorization also included a proposal by Akin for funds to design a replacement for the Navy’s aging fleet of radar-jamming EA-6B “Prowlers”. The likely successor to the “Prowler” would be an F-18 Super Hornet variant that will be known as the EA-18 “Growler”.

Congressman Akin has championed the replacement of the aging prowler fleet with the Super-Hornet “Growler” and is encouraged by the inclusion of the engineering funds in the 2003 defense authorization.

“A decision to replace the aging Prowler fleet with a Super Hornet variant would be a tremendous win for the U.S. military with an improved ability to jam enemy radar and improved survivability for our pilots,” said Akin. “It would also potentially mean the production of 90 additional EA-18 Super Hornets over and above the number already planned.”